

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE BROWN COUNTY
VETERANS' RECOGNITION SUBCOMMITTEE**

Pursuant to Section 19.84, Wis. Stats. a regular meeting of the **Brown County Veterans' Recognition Subcommittee** was held on Tuesday, October 13, 2009, at 5:15 p.m., in Room 201 of the Northern Building, 305 E. Walnut Street, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

PRESENT: Don Bettine, Jim Haskins, Jack Krueger, John Maino, Duane "Snake" Pierce, Sherry Steenbock, Kristen Verhaagh, John Walschinski.

EXCUSED:

ALSO PRESENT: Jerry Polus.

1. Call Meeting to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jack Krueger at 5:15 p.m.

2. Invocation by Jim Haskins.

3. Approve/modify agenda:

A motion was made by D. Bettine and seconded by J. Haskins to approve. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Approve/modify minutes of August 11 and September 8, 2009:

Chair Krueger indicated that notes from September 8, 2009, would not need approval; therefore, the approval would be for minutes of August 11, 2009, only.

A motion was made by J. Walchinski and seconded by S. Steenbock to approve the minutes of August 11, 2009. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. Request from C.P.O. Troy Ness for Membership on the Committee:

Chair Krueger explained that the Mr. Ness is a Naval Reservist Chief Petty Officer who brought the Color Guard to the Brown County Fair. Chair Krueger stated that Mr. Ness asked to be considered for membership.

A motion was made by J. Walchinski and seconded by J. Haskins to approve membership of C.P.O Troy Ness. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Discuss Plans for the 2009 Veterans' Day Program at Duck Creek VFW:

Sherry Steenbock stated that her biggest concern centered around having information printed in the "Green Bay Press Gazette," based on issues that arose last year. Ms. Steenbock explained that it took considerable effort on her part, and still the list of the businesses making the offers was not printed. She said she spoke with Warren Bluhm, who "seemed really great to work with." She said Mr. Bluhm told her he could not guarantee that the article would appear in

Sunday's paper, but he assured her that he will print the list in the article, as well as the website. Ms. Steenbock said she asked Mr. Bluhm about listing the businesses that make donations; he told her that he would list them if there was room to list all of the businesses.

Ms. Steenbock gave Subcommittee members lists of calls made in previous years and requested that the members contact the same companies this year. The "9 in '09" campaign was mentioned; the purpose of this campaign is to encourage members to secure donations from 9 additional businesses. Ms. Steenbock requested that the members call her by October 31, 2009, with the names of businesses providing donations; so she can prepare the list and forward to the media in time.

Ms. Steenbock also said she received permission for the Subcommittee to participate in giving prizes away.

Chair Krueger said he is asking that November's meeting be moved to November 3, instead of November 10.

Kristen Verhaagh asked for an e-mailed or printed copy of "what we all have guaranteed," and offered to help distribute it to veterans' groups. Ms. Steenbock will e-mail the information to Ms. Verhaagh.

Jim Haskins reported that he called Applebee's and Golden Corral, and he will report back with the dates and times at those restaurants. Ms. Steenbock said Pearly Gates Bar & Grill will have burgers, brats, and beverages on November 14th from noon to 4:00 p.m.

Chair Krueger said there are still 2 cases of duffel bags. Ms. Steenbock said she did not think any other door prizes would be needed.

Jerry Polus, Brown County Veterans' Service Officer, asked if someone would contact the Army Surplus Store on Military and find out if the store would provide a gift certificate for a purchase there. Duane Pierce offered to do that.

7. Review All Veterans' Day Programs in the Area & this Committee's Involvement:

Don Bettine reported that the United Patriotic Society will be having "their usual Veterans' Day ceremony" on November 11th at the Brown County Veterans' Memorial Arena. He said "Posting of Colors" would be at 10:15 a.m.; the program would start at 10:30 a.m.; and the program will conclude at 11:00 a.m. with the "Firing of the Volley" and the playing of "Taps."

Mr. Bettine opined that he would like to see an increase in the number of young people. He said last year East High School DECA (Delta Epsilon Chi) gave out Thank-You cards to the veterans. Mr. Polus offered to e-mail his contacts at area schools concerning this.

John Maino said he would be at Duck Creek and said there might be radio coverage during that event.

Duane Pierce said he would attend an all day vigil for Vietnam veterans at the memorial behind the museum and invited members to stop by and show support.

8. Report from CVSO Jerry Polus (if available):

Mr. Polus reported that the annual bus trip to Camp American Legion was “highly successful.”

Mr. Polus brought up the Honor Flight Program—a nationwide program to fly World War II veterans to Washington, D.C. for a day. He said there is a new hub in the Appleton area; and there are 6 veterans, of which 2 are female, selected from Green Bay to go on a flight on October 27, 2009. When Mr. Polus reported that he might be an escort for one of the veterans, Mr. Maino indicated that each veteran must have an escort accompany him or her; and there is a waiting list for the next flight. Mr. Bettine said many of the veterans' organizations have been asked to help with expenses, which Mr. Polus said was about \$80,000 to fly a group to Washington, D.C. Mr. Maino said it costs about \$1,000 to sponsor individual veterans if an organization wants to do that. Mr. Polus suggested that Mr. Maino interview the veterans; and Mr. Polus will provide the addresses of those veterans. Mr. Polus said the contact person for this would be Jon Lidonne at Waupaca County; the website is oldgloryhonorflag.com; and “It’s a great program.”

Concerning the veterans' program at Brown County Fair, Mr. Polus mentioned that next year the Wisconsin National Guard Band might be able to perform; and there would be no cost. When Ms. Steenbock asked why there was no mention of the Navy Band in the Fair posters, Mr. Haskins reported that the information was not given to the Fair Board in time. Mr. Haskins will make sure the Fair Board has the information early enough next year. When Mr. Bettine asked if the Brown County Fair Board had been notified of what was being offered for veterans in Calumet County, Chair Krueger said he approached Dick Koltz, President of the Executive Committee for the Brown County Fair, and the Chairman of the Fair Board in Calumet County. Chair Krueger was told by Mr. Koltz that “It’s just not in their budget to be able to do this.” Chair Krueger indicated that he was told by Calumet County that every county fair is run independently and has priorities. Chair Krueger said he really wants to obtain sponsors next year to provide admission for veterans and their spouses/families and noted that the Fair lost money again this year.

9. Report from Chair Jack Krueger, Including Review of the Media Release & Contacts Made by the Chair:

Chair Krueger reported on his recent trip to Washington, D.C.; he said he is on the National Board of the Veterans and Military Families for Progress. He stated that this organization has 330,000 members nationwide; and there are 61 in Europe. He said there was a new President elected, replacing Matt Cary who had been President since this organization was founded in 2005. He said Mr. Cary remained as Executive Director, and the new by-laws state that the Executive Director must reside in Washington, D.C.

Chair Krueger said he nominated John Maino for the Max Cleland National Award for Outstanding Citizen Committed to Veterans; this award was won by a congressman in New Jersey. Chair Krueger also nominated Mr. Maino for a

media award; and Bob Woodward won this award. Chair Krueger said he was asked to submit Mr. Maino's name again in 2 years; because "they were really impressed with the things that you do."

Chair Krueger continued the report on his trip, which included an audience with Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House. He reported that the topic he brought before Ms. Pelosi concerned the number of suicides (estimated to be 7-8 per month) among the returning military heroes, and expressed that he was "ashamed" that more was not being done in this area. In addition, Chair Krueger said the group met with Max Bacchus and John Kerry. He added that the First Lady spoke briefly about her commitment to wounded veterans; and Chair Krueger opined that the conference itself (the speakers, the workshops) was "phenomenal."

Chair Krueger concluded by noting that some of the original organizers of the Honor Flight program were meeting in Washington, D.C., while he was there.

10. Report from Committee Members (Steenbock, Bettine, Haskins, Maino, Pierce, Verhaagh, & Walschinski):

Mr. Haskins reported that he saw an article concerning Dave Mason's support of a charity entitled "Work Vessels for Veterans." The article indicated that this charity supplies veterans with the tools needed to get into business. He also said he saw an advertisement on television for "friendsofveterans.org" that asked for donations for transportation of disabled veterans. He also reported that the Veterans Health Administration and the National Alliance on Mental Illness have teamed up to provide educational programs for families of veterans.

Mr. Polus said Congressman Kagen released a press announcement that he was instrumental in having Congress sign a bill that extended the first-time home buyers \$8,000 credit for military personnel in active duty serving in a combat zone and, therefore, unable to take advantage of this program.

Ms. Verhaagh reported that there are a couple of open educational scholarships that have not been filled yet. She said these would be available to those veterans from the Desert Storm to Afghanistan era, and the requirements are "fairly...easy to obtain." She offered to have care packages sent to military personnel overseas if the members would provide addresses. She said she would get with Mr. Maino to promote this. She also said there are holiday packages being put together for veterans at King, in the homeless and transitional housing area.

Mr. Maino said Bosses News is sending magazines to the troops; and there is a flyer concerning this posted in the store. He said he is working on two projects: (1) A ramp is being built, through several donations, for a young man from Menominee who was injured in Iraq; and (2) A laptop computer and a year's worth of internet service, along with some travel expenses, are being provided for a young man from Fond du Lac who lost both feet. He continued by reporting that the trip to a Green Bay Packers' game for some veterans from Tomah, Wisconsin, went very well. Mr. Maino will provide information as to where donations can be made for the projects he is involved with.

Mr. Maino opined that the high rate of suicide with the young men returning is "horrendous;" and that the Desert Veterans' group is "phenomenal." Chair Krueger said he brought back some folders with information on this topic and a phone number (hotline) to call. Mr. Polus added that there will be a class for county Veterans' Service Officers regarding this and possible preventative steps, as well as signs to look for. Ms. Verhaagh said the new veterans' facility on Ashland has mental counselors available.

Mr. Pierce said in Casco there is a veterans' memorial that is beautiful; Mr. Maino added that he has seen it and said it was outstanding. Mr. Pierce said he and Mr. Maino attended the visitation for the World War II veteran that was recently found (66 years later); this young man went to Green Bay West High School. Mr. Pierce offered his sympathies to Ms. Verhaagh's friend Dave Rasmussen, who was one of the founding members of Desert Veterans.

Concerning L.Z. (Landing Zone) Lambeau, Mr. Pierce reported that Rolling Thunder's Chapters 3 and 4 are organizing the motorcycle ride from LaCrosse to Green Bay. He added that two "hueys" will fly over the motorcycles from Appleton to Green Bay. When asked if volunteers were needed, Mr. Pierce offered the website (lzlambeau.org) as a resource.

11. Such other matters as authorized by law:

Chair Krueger mentioned moving next month's meeting.

A motion was made by J. Haskins and seconded by D. Pierce to move the date of next month's meeting to November 3, 2009. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

A motion was made by J. Haskins and seconded by J. Walschinski to adjourn at 6:23 p.m. Vote taken. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Next meeting November 3, 2009, at 5:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa M. Alexander
Recording Secretary